SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA

SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA

2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Alberta Government

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR 3

A COUNCIL THAT WORKS FOR SENIORS 4

Addressing Issues Important to Senior Citizens 4

WORKING TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES 5

Contributing Through a Diversity of Knowledge and Experience 5

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP 6

2013-14 Council 6

WORKING TOGETHER 8

ADVANCING THE INTERESTS OF SENIORS 9

Engaging Albertans 9

Building Knowledge 9

GETTING OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY 10

CELEBRATING SENIORS 11

ADDRESSING ISSUES THAT IMPACT SENIORS 11

Safety in Supportive Living Residences 11

Raising Concerns About Long Term Care 11

Home Care 12

Health and Safe Driving 12

Building Accessibility and Signage 12

Transportation 12

Feeding Residents in Long Term Care 13

COUNCIL'S ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT 13

Pharmacare 13

Improving Access to Services and Information for Seniors 14

Seniors Program Advisors 14

Vegreville Care Centre 15

Age-Friendly Communities 15

Shingles Vaccine (Zostavax) 15

Closing Remarks 16

COUNCIL BIOGRAPHIES 17

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It is a pleasure and privilege to be the Chair of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and to provide Albertans with the highlights of our activities over the past fiscal year.

The Council continues to be a valuable source of input and advice to the Government of Alberta. The number of seniors in Alberta is rapidly increasing, and the work of the Council is more important than ever to ensure senior citizens maintain their quality of life and have input into what they believe to be important to their well-being.

Communities across the province benefit from seniors' wisdom, experience and citizenship. Ensuring we have age-friendly communities benefits everyone by making communities welcoming places that are in tune to the needs and priorities of people's needs.

Identifying seniors' needs, priorities and opportunities continues to be the main focus of the Council's work, and its views and perspectives are helping to shape an Alberta where seniors can live their lives to the fullest with dignity and respect.

I wish to express my appreciation to members of the Council for their continued commitment to this unique forum and for their efforts in Alberta communities. A special thank you goes to our departing members — Bev Homeniuk, Rosemary Biggs and Vincent Leung — who have made important contributions to the Council's work.

Thank you also to those who have provided support to the Council during the past year, including staff of Alberta Health and the many individuals and organizations across our province who have welcomed and hosted Council members.

Alana DeLong, Chair
MLA, Calgary-Bow

A COUNCIL THAT WORKS FOR SENIORS

Addressing Issues Important to Senior Citizens

Seniors represent a growing proportion of Alberta's total population and enrich our communities by sharing their experience, knowledge and unique perspectives on life. Whether through employment, business ownership, volunteer efforts or other pursuits, seniors continue to help build our great province.

The Council believes it's important to recognize the tremendous roles that seniors have in our province, and recognize their unique needs. We want Alberta to be a place that is welcoming and supportive of seniors so they enjoy a greater quality of life – at home, work and play.

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta (the "Council") recognizes how important seniors are and works to maintain and improve their quality of life.

Established under the *Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta Act*, the purposes of the Council are[1]:

(a) to advise, report to and make recommendations to the Government on matters relating to senior citizens in Alberta, their well-being and their opportunities for full and equal participation in the life of the Province;

(b) to encourage public discussion and consultation on matters relating to senior citizens;

(c) to review, analyze, consult and make recommendations to the Government respecting

  (i) legislation and policies affecting senior citizens, and

  (ii) the funding and co-ordination of programs and services relating to senior citizens;

(d) to make recommendations to the Government on grants;

(e) to undertake additional activities at the request of the Minister.

The Council serves as a link between seniors, senior serving organizations, and the Government of Alberta. Reporting to the Minister of Health, the Council gathers views and concerns from these groups and discusses what they have heard to determine how the Government of Alberta can enhance its policies, programs and services to better meet the needs of seniors. At times, the Council undertakes further study of issues with assistance from universities and the Alberta Medical Association, so that Council discussions will be more informed.

From these discussions, the Council creates advice and recommendations for the Government of Alberta, which are provided to the Minister of Health.

---

[1] *Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta Act, 1991 cS 13.2 s1.*

WORKING TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

In its work, the Council is guided by its vision, mission and values:

- **Vision** – To increase the recognition of seniors as one of Alberta's most respected and valuable resources.
- **Mission** – Consult with seniors, seniors' organizations and others to gather information and provide advice to the government regarding seniors' needs.
- **Values** – Integrity, accountability and respect; through these, the Council strives to enable Alberta seniors to maintain their dignity and quality of life.

Contributing Through a Diversity of Knowledge and Experience

The Council is comprised of people from a variety of backgrounds with a range of knowledge and experience of senior's issues.

Up to 20 members serve on the Council at any given time and one member of the Council is appointed from:

- the Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- the Alberta Medical Association; and
- a university as defined in the *Post-secondary Learning Act*.

Under the *Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta Act*, members of the Council are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for up to a three-year term and may be re-appointed for up to an additional three years, to a maximum of six consecutive years.

Albertans can apply to be members of the Council through an open application process, which is posted on the Government of Alberta jobs web site. Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the posting and are screened and interviewed to ensure they possess an appropriate level of knowledge, skills and experience to assist the Council in achieving its objectives and carrying out its role in the community.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

For much of the 2013-2014 fiscal year membership on the Council was at a low level of only 10-11 members, including the Chair. During this fiscal year, three council members stepped down and nine new members were appointed.

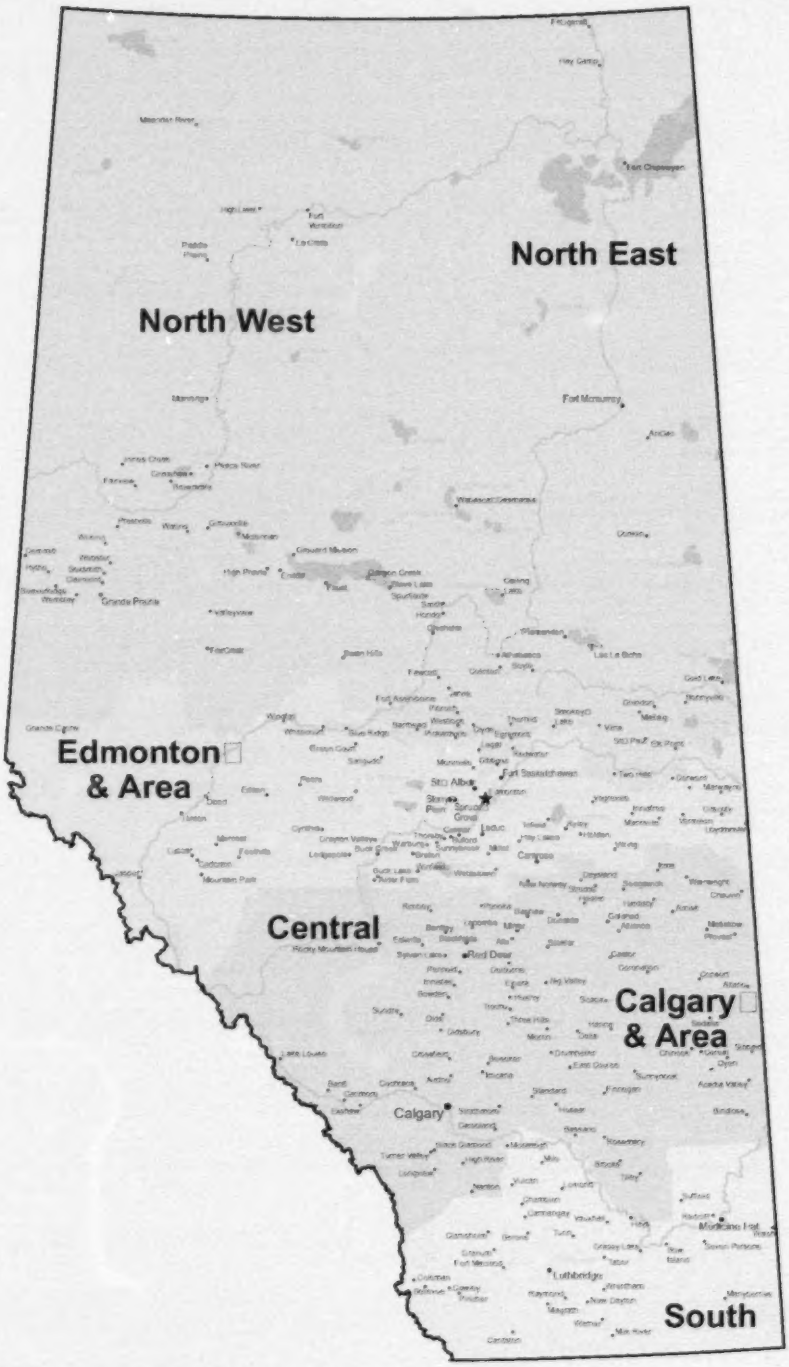
Members of the Council represent one of six geographic regions in the province. In addition, this year the Minister has appointed two new members for a one-year term to represent the views of seniors' centres in Alberta. By engaging with seniors and stakeholder organizations in their regions, Council members learn about local issues and obtain an insight into regional priorities.

2013-14 Council

NAME	REGION	APPOINTMENT DATE
Alana DeLong, Chair	MLA, Calgary Bow	October 2011
Dr. Guy Gokiert	Alberta Medical Association member	March 2013
Dr. Al Cook	Alberta universities member	June 2011
Marg Usherwood	Calgary and Area Region	August 2011
Linda Scheibner	Calgary and Area Region	December 2013
Vincent Leung	Calgary and Area Region	Resigned December 2013
Debra Armstrong	Calgary and Area Region	December 2013
Roger Will	Central Region	December 2013
Rosemarie Biggs	Edmonton and Area Region	Retired September 2013
Laurie Morris	Edmonton and Area Region	April 2012
Dan Van Alstine	Edmonton and Area Region	May 2013
Margaret Mrazek	Edmonton and Area Region	December 2013
Roger Laing	Edmonton and Area Region	December 2013
Bev Homeniuk	North East Region	Retired September 2013
Larry Lang	North East Region	December 2013
Sally Heinen	North West Region	December 2013
Jane Manning	North West Region	May 2011
Robert Tarleck	South Region	December 2013
Monica Morrison	North Seniors Centres	December 2013
Luanne Whitmarsh	South Seniors Centres	December 2013

We want to express our thanks to the following members who are no longer on the Council for all of their hard work and dedication to seniors in Alberta.

Bev Homeniuk	North East Region
Rosemarie Biggs	Edmonton and Area Region
Vincent Leung	Calgary and Area Region


North East
North West
Edmonton
& Area
Central
Calgary
& Area
Calgary
South

WORKING TOGETHER

The Council currently uses a committee structure to review information gathered from seniors and stakeholders in their regional areas. Information is examined in conjunction with government policies, programs and services that impact seniors to determine if recommendations are needed. Committees provide their recommendations to the whole of Council and the Council then decides what action should be taken. Each committee has a mandate to examine certain issues and subject matter:

- **Accommodations Committee** – Reviews and develops policy recommendations related to seniors accommodations. With a view to related programs and services that are already available, the committee determines where service gaps may exist and determines ways to address identified accommodation issues.
- **Communications Committee** – Reviews existing government communications methods and materials to help ensure seniors receive effective and relevant information regarding seniors programs and services.
- **Education and Research Committee** – Collaborates with Alberta's post-secondary institutions to share knowledge, expertise and research on issues that affect our aging population.
- **Elder Abuse/Diversity Committee** – Looks at community and government initiatives to reduce and address elder abuse, and considers ways to ensure ethnic or culturally diverse seniors have information about these issues. The committee also evaluates existing programs to help ensure they are meeting the needs of seniors and provides recommendations for improvement.
- **Health and Wellness Committee** – Examines health-related government programs and services, identifies health service issues and gaps, and proposes solutions that will help enhance the wellness of seniors.
- **Transportation Committee** – Determines what transportation services are available for seniors and makes recommendations that will improve the availability of safe and affordable transportation for seniors.

In addition to its standing committee structure, the Council has added two new Senior Centre Representative positions for a one-year term. These two members focus on gathering information from seniors' centers regarding their challenges and opportunities to support seniors in their communities. Information gathered will be summarized and evaluated for discussion at Council and advice or recommendations made by the entire Council will be forwarded to the Minister of Health for consideration.

ADVANCING THE INTERESTS OF SENIORS

The Council gathers information about issues that affect seniors in a number of ways, and also plays a role in recognizing and celebrating the contributions of seniors in Alberta.

Engaging Albertans

Within the geographic regions they represent, Council members directly engage with seniors, seniors' organizations, and interested Albertans. Often times, this involves members meeting informally and talking with seniors and others at events held in their communities. This direct contact enables members to hear perspectives on current and emerging issues first-hand.

Building Knowledge

Throughout the year, members build upon their knowledge of senior-related issues to help them identify ways to enhance the well-being of seniors in Alberta.

Council also acquires knowledge of seniors' issues by researching relevant sources of information through the internet, including Government of Alberta websites, reports and materials. This aids them when communicating with seniors in their communities. On occasion, members will attend conferences and workshops to further build upon their knowledge, such as the Grey Matters Conference.

In addition, Council receives information and presentations from Alberta Health and other Alberta government departments and seniors' advocacy groups.

This past year, Council received presentations from the following seniors related stakeholders during their quarterly meetings.

Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network
http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7702.asp

Alberta Network of Senior Related Organizations (ANSRO)

Alberta Medical Association
https://www.albertadoctors.org/

GETTING OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY

During 2013-14, members of the Council split up into small groups to visit with seniors, friends, family members, operators and members of seniors advocacy groups, to listen to their views and perspectives on issues of importance. The information gathered during these visits is valuable to the mandate of the Council and contributes to the recommendations and advice they provide to government.

Calgary Visit May 14-15, 2013

Garrison Green Retirement Residence
Wing Kei Care Centre
Bethany Village
Open Door Seniors Fellowship of Calgary
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
Monterey Place
Lodge at Valley Ridge
Bowness Seniors Center
Greater Forest Lawn Senior Citizen's Society
Silvera
Bow Center Place Housing Society
The Golden Age Club

Edmonton Visit November 27-28, 2013

Central Lions Seniors Association
Canterbury Foundation
Lifestyle Options Whitemud
Calder Seniors Centre
St. Andrews Centre
Shepherds Care, Kensington Village
Edmonton Chinatown Care Centre
West End Seniors Activity Centre
Millwoods Seniors Centre
Eaux Claires, Extendicare
Operation Friendship McCauley Lodge
Northgate Lions Seniors Centre
Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton
Laurier House Lynwood
South East Edmonton Seniors Association
St. Michaels Millennium
Rosedale Estates

CELEBRATING SENIORS

Each year the Government of Alberta proclaims the first full week of June as Seniors' Week to acknowledge the contributions of seniors in Alberta. The Council members attend events in their communities to raise awareness of their work and to talk with seniors.

During Seniors' Week in 2013, sixty-eight municipalities joined the Government of Alberta to proclaim Seniors' Week. In addition, organizations across the province registered their events on the Council's web page to inform Albertans about activities occurring in their communities.

ADDRESSING ISSUES THAT IMPACT SENIORS

Through its direct engagement with seniors and family members, the Council has identified and discussed a number of issues. These issues are important to seniors and all Albertans, and the Council recommends government take note of these ongoing concerns, so seniors are able to age safely, with dignity and respect.

Safety in Supportive Living Residences

For many seniors in Alberta, home is a long term care or other supportive living residence. Residents and their loved ones want to be assured that these homes are safe places to live. Council members have spoken with several seniors and family members who want to make sure that seniors' residences have suitable emergency systems (such as sprinklers) and emergency evacuation plans. It is important that standards are in place regarding emergency preparedness, and that all seniors' supportive living residences adhere to these standards.

Raising Concerns About Long Term Care

When a senior resides in a long term care center or other seniors' home, their family members often experience a mix of emotions and stress. Understandably, family members feel the need to be strong advocates for their loved ones. However, Council has heard that some residents and family members feel unable or afraid to raise concerns about the level of care being provided for fear of reprisals from the management and staff. This is a serious concern.

However, while families should always be able to advocate for their loved ones, there have been times when it goes beyond advocating and it becomes interfering with the care being provided. This raises other concerns, including safety concerns for the recipient of the care.

Policies should be in place to ensure both parties' issues are clearly dealt with to ensure the best care is provided to the resident.

Home Care

Many Albertans have told the government that they wish to live in their own homes for as long as practical and the government has stated it is committed to the philosophy of "aging in the right place". Home care provides vital services that enable seniors to remain at home longer. Council has heard many concerns from seniors regarding the poor quality and lack of service they are receiving, and they are concerned about funding levels for these much needed services. Agencies that provide home care services face several challenges, including staff wages and benefits, travel costs, and recruitment of skilled workers. The Council knows it is more economical to provide home care service to someone living in their own home than in a care center and these issues need to be considered when determining funding levels for home care.

Health and Safe Driving

There is an ongoing concern regarding seniors' ability to drive safely as their health declines. The Council has been examining the types of programs being offered by communities to promote and encourage safe driving among seniors and believes it is important to raise awareness of these issues. As the population of seniors in Alberta grows, the issue of safe driving will become increasingly more important to families and seniors alike. Collaboration among government, the medical community, and stakeholders in the private and nonprofit sectors, is needed to effectively address this issue.

Building Accessibility and Signage

Albertans have expressed concerns regarding how difficult it is to access some buildings in Alberta. The proper placement of handicapped door openers is important to ensure that buildings are Age Friendly. This is important for seniors and all age groups, specifically for those with reduced mobility. Signage is another area that needs to be reviewed to ensure messaging is clear and easy to understand for all Albertans, including new immigrants and the elderly. Improving these areas will enhance Albertans' quality of life.

Transportation

The Council continues to hear concerns about the lack of transportation options available for seniors throughout Alberta. Many seniors do not or are no longer able to drive, and require transportation alternatives. Seniors are having difficulty getting the transportation services they need. In some communities, there are no transportation options available, and in others there are long wait times for people who must rely on alternate methods of transportation. Transportation is vital to support seniors' ability to stay independent, so they can continue to get to medical appointments, do their shopping, and remain socially engaged within their communities. More work needs to be done to ensure seniors in all communities - rural and urban - have access to affordable and reliable transportation options.

Feeding Residents in Long Term Care

Council is concerned that staff in long term care centers do not have the training or understanding needed to adequately feed residents safely. Training needs to be enhanced to ensure staff are aware of proper swallowing techniques and potential pooling of food by residents. The time allocated for feeding a senior needs to be reviewed to ensure nutritional needs are being met.

COUNCIL'S ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT

Throughout the year Council provides advice and recommendations to government through the Minister of Health. Over the past year, the Council has developed advice and recommendations on several issues, with the goal of improving seniors' well-being and their opportunities for full and equal participation in Alberta communities.

Pharmacare

One of the benefits provided by the Government of Alberta to seniors is coverage for prescription drugs. The government has been considering a new Pharmacare program that could mean changes to the current coverage scheme. Seniors are concerned about the financial implications this may have on their quality of life.

Given the critical importance of prescription drugs for the health of many seniors in Alberta, in August 2013, the Council recommended that:

- The Government of Alberta provide seniors with the details of the new Pharmacare program at least six months to one year ahead of implementation, so that seniors have enough time to prepare financially and make adjustments to their budgets if necessary;
- consideration be given to including prescribed over-the-counter medications (e.g., acetaminophen, aspirin and vitamins) in benefit coverage;
- drugs on the current Alberta Blue Cross Drug Benefit List not be de-listed and that the Drug Benefit List be expanded to include regularly-prescribed medications such as Lyrica, Zostavax, Aricept, Exelon and Memantine, which are specifically and frequently prescribed;
- consideration be given to ensuring seniors who require blister packing of their medications are not negatively impacted; and
- the Minister of Health assures seniors that their private financial information will be protected from those who do not need this information.

The Council also requested they be consulted on the Pharmacare program, so they can offer input based on the concerns and perspectives they have heard from seniors throughout Alberta. Subsequently, the government has placed the launch of the new Pharmacare Program on hold.

Improving Access to Services and Information for Seniors

Council has heard concerns from seniors, their family members, and senior-serving organizations that it is frustrating and difficult to access information about seniors programs and services by phone from the Alberta Supports Contact Centre. Numerous issues have been reported, such as: being placed on hold for long periods of time, difficulties with the automated menu-driven phone system and understanding information provided by the Contact Centre staff. These experiences are leaving Albertans feeling frustrated and seniors feeling marginalized. For many seniors, the Alberta Supports Contact Centre is one of only a few options to obtain information. Therefore, it is important that the Contact Centre be a reliable and respectful service that has as few barriers as possible. It is also imperative that other service delivery methods be explored, so that seniors have many ways to obtain the information they need about programs and services that could assist them.

The Council has recommended to the Minister that:

- government work to resolve service issues with the Alberta Supports Contact Centre;
- a dedicated line for seniors be provided and answered by an employee;
- a dedicated line be established for senior serving agencies, to facilitate communication between their clients and the government;
- the Government of Alberta reduce the time people are left on hold;
- Alberta Supports Contact Centre staff be given customer service training specific to dealing with seniors to improve their customer service interface; and
- the Government of Alberta consider television advertising to raise awareness of seniors programs, benefits, and services so seniors will be better informed.

Seniors Programs Advisors

Across Alberta, Seniors Programs Advisors provide training and deliver information sessions to senior serving agencies that provide direct service to seniors. The Council advised the government that given the size and population of Calgary it would be prudent to have a Seniors Program Advisor in that region to ensure e is a strong demand for the services provided by Seniors Programs Advisors. The government has now hired a Seniors Programs Advisor to provide this service to Calgary and its surrounding communities.

Vegreville Care Centre

Council members heard a number of concerns regarding the poor quality of resident care in the Vegreville Care Centre. The concerns related mainly to staffing levels and the relationship between the Centre and residents/family members. As a result, the Council asked the Minister of Health to look into the situation at Vegreville Care Centre to determine what could be done to improve the quality of life for its residents.

Age-Friendly Communities

On January 1, 2011, the first baby boomer reached 65 years of age, and today, every 24 minutes another Albertan does the same. A long-anticipated demographic shift has begun, led by this very large population cohort known as the baby boomers. As our population ages, it makes sense to encourage our communities to adopt the principle of an Age-Friendly community, so all Albertans regardless of age, can enjoy a good quality of life.

The work that the Government of Alberta has done to encourage municipalities, stakeholders and concerned citizens to start Age-Friendly initiatives in their communities is to be commended; however, the Council recommends that since Alberta is situated in a northern climate, it would be prudent to keep this is mind when designing buildings and other infrastructure. Council recommends that guidelines for northern climates be developed and incorporated into the Age-Friendly community initiative.

Shingles Vaccine (Zostavax)

The Council has previously recommended to the Government of Alberta that the vaccine for shingles be added to the Blue Cross Coverage for Seniors Drug Benefit List. According to Alberta Health an average of 1,334 shingles cases are reported annually among seniors. Shingles is a painful virus that can result in repeat visits to hospitals and physicians to diagnose and treat the illness. This not only takes a human toll on seniors and their families, but also results in costs to the health system which could be avoided. Given the important difference this can make for the health and well-being of seniors, the Council has reiterated its recommendation to the Minister of Health, and hopes for a positive response.

Closing Remarks

The Council wishes to thank the many people who have shared their views and perspectives over the past year with regional representatives of the Council. The thoughts and concerns of seniors, families, and all interested Albertans are very important and support the work of the Council.

Council also wishes to thank the seniors organizations and stakeholders for their time, support and perspective. Hearing about their experiences, challenges and successes is very important, and the work they do is essential to seniors. Their hospitality at events and meetings has provided Council members with diverse and rewarding opportunities to directly engage with seniors and the people who serve seniors.

Members of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta are privileged to serve on this unique Council and hope its advice and recommendations will result in tangible actions that advance the interests of seniors and improve their quality of life.

COUNCIL BIOGRAPHIES

Alana DeLong
MLA Calgary Bow Constituency

Alana DeLong was elected to her fourth term on April 23, 2012, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly representing the Constituency of Calgary Bow.

Ms. DeLong is appointed a member of the Legislative Offices Committee; Public Accounts Committee; Standing Committee on Private Bills; and Standing Committee on Families and Communities. She is Chair of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta. As well, Ms. DeLong is Canadian Vice President and Chair of the Pacific North West Economic Region (PNWER). She previously co-chaired the 2010 PNWER Calgary Summit Host Committee. Born in Nelson, British Columbia, Ms. Alana DeLong obtained her Bachelor of Science (Honours) in mathematics with a minor in theatre from the University of British Columbia. She then moved to Calgary, where she attended courses at the University of Calgary, Master's in Computer Science Program.

Ms. DeLong has more than 20 years of experience in the field of information technology and has worked for many leading high-tech computer firms in Calgary, serving as President of Sterlingrock Systems Incorporated. Alana was also the first female computer mainframe salesman with Sperry Univac. She was also the first female marketing manager with Canadian General Electric.

An active member of her community, some of Ms. DeLong's past contributions have been as President of Tuesday Nooners Toastmasters and as a singer with the Calgary Opera Chorus. She has campaigned extensively for the Red Cross Society, the Cancer Fund, the Heart and Stroke Fund, Flowers of Hope, and various municipal, national and provincial elections. She hosted a TV ski program and has been an actress with Theatre Calgary.

For more than 30 years Ms. DeLong has called Calgary Bow home. Alana enjoys the outdoors and has hiked the province's mountains and canoed most of the rivers in southern Alberta. Alana DeLong has two grown children, Samantha and James.

Member's web site: *www.alanadelong.com*

Dr. John Guy Gokiert
Alberta Medical Association member

Dr. Gokiert was born in southern Manitoba and moved to the Edmonton area with his family where he attended the University of Alberta. After medical school, he moved to Westlock, Alberta with his wife, Susan, where they had three children and where Dr. Gokiert ran a general practice until his retirement in 2009. During his career, Dr. Gokiert worked with the Alberta Medical Association (President in 1994-1995), the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Protective Association.

Dr. Gokiert has always been interested in all aspects of medicine, particularly the care of the elderly. He was involved as president of the Medical Staff at both the acute care hospital and a long term care facility in Westlock as well as a Medical Examiner for the province. Dr. Gokiert was also a teacher for both Medical Students and Family Medicine residents at the University of Alberta.

Dr. Al Cook
Alberta universities member

Dr. Cook became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2008.

Dr. Cook specializes in assistive device technology and is currently researching the use of robots to develop and reveal cognitive and language abilities in children who have severe disabilities.

He received his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering at the University of Colorado and his masters in Bioengineering as well as his doctorate from the University of Wyoming.

In addition to being associated with the Assistive Device Service at the Glenrose Hospital, Dr. Cook has served as Co-Director of the Assistive Device Center at California State University. Dr. Cook is a Professor in the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at the University of Alberta. Dr. Cook also serves on several committees for Alberta Health & Wellness.

Margaret Usherwood
Calgary and Area Region

Margaret Usherwood began her career as a Registered Nurse, specializing in Intensive Care at a major urban hospital. She completed studies in Marketing at Ryerson University in Toronto while working as a clinical researcher in the pharmaceutical industry. Mrs. Usherwood has held the position of Senior Product Manager for medical capital equipment companies, and has also been published in medical journals. Mrs. Usherwood has a number of years of experience working with seniors in the province, including experience in home care and seniors housing, as well as providing market research and consulting for the elder service and senior housing markets as a partner in U2 Consulting. She has also completed the Gerontology Certificate Program at the University of Calgary. Mrs. Unsherwood is the Client Service Manager at Carewest, and volunteers her time on many boards that focus on seniors, including the Seniors Housing Forum, the Alberta Association for Gerontology and the Women in Aging Society. Mrs. Usherwood became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2011

Linda Scheibner
Calgary and Area Region

Linda Scheibner hails from Gem and has served the Calgary and Area Region since December 2010. She has a genuine respect and interest in the issues that arise for seniors in the province, and looks forward to being able to provide another voice for the provinces rural and urban senior's populations. Mrs. Scheibner has served on many different boards and committees within the hamlet of Gem and the County of Newell, such as: Gem FCSS, the Gem Library Board, Newell Further Education Council and the Gem Community Association.

Mrs. Scheibner completed a Community and Youth Leadership program at Lethbridge Community College and remains active in her community. She and her husband own and operate a farm and feedlot, where she enjoys the benefits and challenges that are associated with farming and the rural way of life. The family farm has provided for the Scheibners' since 1914 and their 3 sons are now raising the 5th generation of Scheibners' in the community of Gem.

Vincent Leung
Calgary and Area Region

Vincent W. Leung is a Chartered Accountant and a passionate leader about seniors care and wellness in his community. Mr. Leung was instrumental in the founding the Wing Kei Care Centre, in Calgary—the first Chinese nursing home, to provide culturally and dietary appropriate programming to its residents. Since the beginning of its operations in 2005, the Wing Kei Care Centre has won acclaims in meeting provincial and national standards. During Mr. Leung's term as a member of the Senate at the University of Calgary, he participated actively with local and international communities.

Mr. Leung was the recipient of the Alberta Centennial Award in 2005 and the International Achievement Award from the University of Calgary in 2006.

Mr. Leung became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2010

Debra Armstrong
Calgary and Area Region

Debra Armstrong is the Executive Director of LINKages Society of Alberta, a social based agency that connects youth and vulnerable seniors in meaningful ways. Debra has a Bachelor of Social Work and is registered with the Alberta College of Social Workers. Her early careers as a Case Manager with Alberta Child and Family Services and as a Community Social Worker with the City of Calgary has served as a strong foundation for the work she does today with youth, seniors, families and communities.

An active community member Debra was the President of her Community Association, President of the Calgary Youth Justice Society and Council member for Agape Hospice. Debra is an active Red Cross volunteer and an alumni of Leadership Calgary. Debra has been recognized by United Way's Spirit of Gold Award and under her leadership The LINKages Society was a recipient of a 2013 Minister's Seniors Services Award.

Roger Will
Central Region

Roger Will lives in Red Deer, Alberta and has been a Real Estate agent for the past 28 years. Roger finds it very rewarding giving back to his community and has been actively involved with many boards, committees and associations since 1998.

Some of Roger's past board service includes: Persons with Developmental Disabilities (2003-2009); Community Advisory Board, Homelessness Initiative & Affordable Housing (2007 - 2011); Governmental Affairs Committee for Alberta Real Estate Association (2004-2009); and the Mayor's Task Force to End Homelessness (2004-2007).

Rosemarie Biggs
Edmonton and Area Region

Rosemarie Biggs was a community pharmacist when she started a home visit program for seniors. She used her prescription deliveries as an opportunity to discuss with seniors their medications and how to take them properly.

Her community and professional involvement includes serving as president of the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association in 1996. She was re-elected as the association's president in 1998.

Ms. Biggs has also spoken nationally and internationally, and has received several awards in recognition of her work. The awards include the Canadian Pharmacists' Association's Pharmacist Care of Older Persons Award and the Pride of Strathcona Award for her dedication to patients' well-being.

Ms. Biggs became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2007.

Laurie Morris
Edmonton and Area Region

Laurie Morris is a clinical social worker employed at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital in Edmonton, and works primarily in the area of geriatrics. She has extensive contact with seniors, their caregivers and families. An area of interest and clinical focus for Laurie is dementia and capacity assessment.

Over the years, Laurie has been involved in a volunteer capacity with her professional association, with community social service agencies/organizations, with school parent advisory councils, and with sports/recreation events and associations.

Laurie became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2009.

Reverend Canon Daniel R. Van Alstine
Edmonton and Area Region

Reverend Canon Daniel R. Van Alstine, has been an Anglican priest for the past thirty three years, and has extensive experience working with seniors, community organizations and seniors' programs. Reverend Canon Van Alstine received the dignity of Canon, All Saints Cathedral in 2006, and was a recipient of the Province of Alberta Volunteer Service Award in 1988. Reverend Canon Van Alstine studied at the University of Alberta receiving his BA in Sociology, Religious Studies and Anthropology in 1973.

Reverend Canon Van Alstine is an active member of the community, giving numerous hours of service to a broad sector of organizations ranging from Disaster Chaplain with the City of Edmonton, Consultancy work for Family Violence and Bullying Initiatives with the Department of Child Services, Province of Alberta to being a Member on the Animal Welfare Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta.

Margaret Mrazek Q.C.
Edmonton and Area Region

Marg Mrazek began her career as a general duty nurse. She later held senior management positions in an acute care hospital until she returned to University to obtain her LL.B at the University of Alberta, Faculty of Law. She subsequently carried out a general practice of law. In addition to her L.L.B., Marg has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing and Master's Degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Alberta.

Marg's varied career in health care did include some involvement in the provision of care for the elderly as well as managerial responsibility for programs of care impacting seniors. In her practice of law, she has provided legal advice on a variety of legal issues, which has included issues relevant to seniors. She has served on a number of boards including being Chair of the Fatality Review Board and member of the Board of Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. She also has been involved in the community of St. Albert where she resides.

Marg was privileged to be able to assist with the care for her mother over a number of years which provided her with an understanding and insight into some of the issues facing seniors, in particular older seniors who wish to remain independent and active in the community. These insights she believes will assist her as she serves as a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta.

Roger Laing
Edmonton and Area Region

Roger is the Executive Director of Sage, the Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton, a role he has fulfilled since 1997. As Executive Director, he has been active in many community collaborations and instrumental in establishing a number of innovative services for seniors.

Roger played a key role in establishing the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) and the Alberta Association of Seniors Centres. He has twice served on the ESCC Board in Executive roles and currently serves as President of Alberta Association of Seniors Centres.

In 2005, Roger received a Centennial medal from the Government of Alberta for his work with seniors and in 2013 he received a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for his service to seniors.

Beverly Homeniuk
North East Region

Beverly Homeniuk has served on several boards, committees and organizations at district, regional and provincial levels in the Vegreville region.

She has also been an outreach worker with the Vegreville Health Unit, where she developed and implemented visiting programs for the elderly and homebound. Most recently, she served in an administrative position with the provincial government where a large part of her role involved providing support and assistance to seniors.

In 1998, Mrs. Homeniuk was awarded the Northeast 4-H Region Award of Distinction for volunteer leadership, and her family received the Edmonton Northlands/Alberta Motor Association Farm Family Award in 2001.

Mrs. Homeniuk became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2007.

Larry Lang
North East Region

Larry lives in Clyde, Alberta and spent 20 years developing international trade. Larry has a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture/Economics and speaks Mandarin and French. Larry retired in 1993 from his position as the Director, Southeast Asia Division with Economic Development and Tourism.

Larry did various consultant projects for private companies to establish export markets for Alberta beef products with buyers from Korea, Japan and Hong Kong.

In 1986 Larry set up a cattle ranch north of Edmonton and in 2006 began a pedigreed Alpaca producing operation. For the past 10 years, Larry and his wife served on the board of the Clyde Seniors Drop in Centre and he continues to be involved with seniors in lodges in his community.

Sally Heinen
North West Region

Sally Heinen is enthusiastic about promoting seniors to be active participants in all aspects of their communities. She has chaired and volunteered on the Community Services Board, which supported a Home Support Program for seniors, enabling them to live in their own homes as long as possible.

Mrs. Heinen's love of children led her to spend the last twenty years in the school system, where she spent many hours volunteering with the students on special projects or with minor sports like hockey. She also chaired and volunteered with many Parent Advisory Councils – sometimes on three at a time.

Mrs. Heinen has developed an immense passion for seniors, mostly from her family members. She grew up watching her grandparents manoeuvre through retirement. And now, her parents are in their eighties and are still working and loving it. All of this has helped Mrs. Heinen to realize her belief that seniors continue to have an important role in our society.

Jane Manning
North West Region

Jane Manning is a Registered Nurse and a board member of the Wapiti Community Dorm Society, which manages the Rotary House Emergency Shelter in Grande Prairie.

Ms. Manning is also a member of the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta Continuing Competence Committee, the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, and the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Northwest Region Board.

Until she retired in 2007, Ms. Manning also held the position of Vice-President of Regional Health Services for the Peace Country Health Region.

Ms. Manning became a member of the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta in 2011.

Robert D. (Bob) Tarleck, M.A., M.Ed., Ako'Tasi
South Region

Robert Tarleck is a long-time educator who received a lifetime membership from the Alberta Teachers' Association for his work in education and public Service.

As a municipal councillor he played a leadership role in creating the Lethbridge and District Community Futures Program and the Native Liaison Committee. Bob was recognized by the Alberta Human Rights Commission for his work with the aboriginal community and was subsequently elected to the Kainai Chieftainship with the name Ako'tasi (Many Horses).

As mayor he played a central role in creating Economic Development Lethbridge, a broad-based community development model that includes representation from the environmental, ethnic, cultural, aboriginal and seniors sectors. Since retiring from municipal politics in 2001, Bob has been a member of the Alberta Economic Development Authority, the Oldman Watershed Council, and the Aboriginal Housing Society. He has also undertaken research projects on water and alternative energy for a coalition of rural communities in southern Alberta.

Monica Morrison
North Seniors Centres

Monica has been involved with seniors for 23 years. With her recreation background, Monica has worked in long term care, adult day programming, seniors' centres and community support services. Monica spent most of her career in Ontario and moved to Red Deer in 2011 so she and her husband could be closer to their daughter and grandchild. Monica is the Executive Director at the Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre in Red Deer and is very involved in her community.

Monica is a director on the Alberta Association of Senior Centres Board and a member of the Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Network. She is also a member of the Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Alliance and chairs the Living Wage Subcommittee. Monica is actively developing a community protocol for Elder Abuse, and chairs the community conversation to develop a hoarding support services protocol. Monica's passion is seniors and believes that all seniors deserve a good quality of life. She and her staff work hard with the community to find solutions to seniors' issues and identify service gaps

Luanne Whitmarsh
South Seniors Centres

Luanne Whitmarsh became the Chief Executive Officer at Kerby Centre on July 1, 2008. Luanne is a Registered Social Worker and Certified Professional Consultant on Aging. Although most of Luanne's career has centered on working with people with developmental disabilities, she is really enjoying the senior sector. Luanne is devoted to community development and partnerships that serve and support older adults. Luanne has actively participated on the Older Adult Service Providers of Calgary since the beginning and contributes to the goals of the group and is the Vice-President of The Alberta Association of Seniors Centres.

SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA

SENIORS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ALBERTA

Contact Information

Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta
c/o Alberta Health
600 Standard Life Centre
10405 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton Alberta T5J 4R7

Telephone*: 780-422-2321
Fax*: 780-422-8762
* to phone or fax toll-fee outside of Edmonton, first dial 310-0000

Email: saca@gov.ab.ca

Website: www.health.alberta.ca and follow the links to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta

Alberta
Government